

Gyalsab je says in his ***Ornament of the Essence***:

[The following sutric passage]: "Shariputra, a Bodhisattva Mahasattva sees a thousand yojanas with a physical sublime eye..." is an instruction [by the Buddha] on the five sublime eyes because it teaches that the objects and object-possessors of the five sublime eyes are established as being of one taste in suchness. Therefore, while explaining that conventionally the five sublime eyes have the ability and power to perceive their objects, [the sutra also] explains that ultimately [the five sublime eyes] do not have their own nature.

With regard to [the five sublime eyes]:

- (1) The physical sublime eye is limited to distinct phenomena; it perceives subtle and coarse visual form within the three-thousand-fold [world system of our universe], [at a distance ranging] from [at least] one hundred yojanas.
- (2) The celestial sublime eye, which arose from the fruition of previously [accumulated] virtuous, contaminated karma, exactly knows death-transference and rebirth of all sentient beings.
- (3) The sublime eye of wisdom does not conceptualize true existence with respect to all phenomena but directly realizes the lack of true existence.
- (4) The sublime eye of Dharma realizes all Arya beings of sharp and weak faculties.
- (5) And the sublime eye of a Buddha is a completely enlightened object-possessor [which realizes] all aspects of all phenomena in accordance with their variations.

The physical sublime eye exists from the path of accumulation onwards, the celestial sublime eye from the path of preparation onwards, the sublime eye of wisdom from [the meditative equipoise of] the path of seeing onwards, the sublime eye of Dharma from the subsequent attainment [of the path of seeing] onwards, the sublime eye of a Buddha from the Buddha ground onwards, and the similitude [of the sublime eye of a Buddha] from the eighth ground onwards.

If you possess these five eyes: the physical sublime eye knows exactly where the spiritual guides teaching the Dharma, your disciples, etc. are abiding within the three-thousand-fold [world system of our universe]. The second [the celestial sublime eye knows] where your disciples die, transmigrate, and are reborn. The third [the sublime eye of wisdom] directly knows the meaning of the [ultimate] mode of abidance, which is the method for subduing disciples. The fourth [the sublime eye of Dharma] knows well the particularities of the faculties of the trainees who are subject to assistance and to teaching the Dharma.

Even when having merely attained a similitude of the fifth [the sublime eye of Dharma], through knowing most of the varieties of objects of knowledge, you are urged from within towards practice, and self-sufficiently engage in practice without depending on others.

This completes the description of the five sublime eyes from Gyalsab je's ***Ornament of the Essence***.

Please note that one yojana equals about 7 kilometres / 4.34 miles.

Also, following ancient Indian cosmology, the Buddhist Abhidharma literature explains that there are an infinite number of universes and that each universe is made of a billion worlds, i.e. of a three-thousand-fold world system.

Each world has at its centre a Mount Meru surrounded by seven oceans and seven rings of golden mountains separating them. Outside are the four continents and eight subcontinents (two out at sea, left and right of each of the continents). We humans live on the southern continent called "Jambudvīpa". This entire world is then surrounded by the outer iron mountains.

One thousand of such worlds constitute a 'thousand-fold world system' (a chiliocosm). Multiplying a thousand-fold world system by one thousand equals a 'two-thousand-fold world system' (a dichiliocosm), and multiplying a two-thousand-fold world system by one thousand equals a 'three-thousand-fold world system' (a trichiliocosm), i.e. one billion worlds.

Therefore, a universe such as our universe is made of one billion worlds. These billion worlds sequentially come into existence, remain, and are destroyed at the same time.

Regarding the first sublime eye, the physical sublime eye can perceive coarse or subtle visual form within our three-thousand-fold world system; it perceives those visual forms at a distance ranging from at least one hundred yojanas to anywhere within (but not beyond) our three-thousand-fold world system. As will be explained below in Lama Tsongkhapa's Golden Rosary the objects of the physical sublime eye are

limited to distinct objects, since they are limited to the phenomena that pertain to the three-thousand-fold world system.

Regarding the second sublime eye, the celestial sublime eye directly perceives death-transference and rebirth of sentient beings. This means that it is able to perceive death and the accompanying transference of consciousness as well as the rebirth of sentient beings who may, for instance, live in a different country.

Furthermore, the celestial sublime eye is different from the fourth, fifth, and sixth sublime eyes in that it, as Gyaltsab je explains, "arose from the fruition of previously [accumulated] virtuous, contaminated karma." This means that the celestial sublime eye did not arise as the result of meditating on any of the four concentrations in this lifetime but it arose as the fruition of karmic result of having in a former life meditated on any of the four concentrations. Such meditation, though virtuous, is nonetheless subsumed under Samsara and thus *contaminated*. According to the **Golden Rosary**, the physical sublime eye also arose from the fruition of karma that was accumulated in a former life. (See Handout 21 ????)

Next follows the presentation of the five sublime eyes according to Panchen Sonam Drakpa's **General Meaning** and **Decisive Analysis**.

However, please note that the following explanations are not completely literal translations of these two texts but, for the sake of clarity, are modified and interspersed with additional explanations.

The presentation of the five sublime eyes according to the **General Meaning**:

The reason for explaining the five sublime eyes as the seventh topic of the ten topics of Mahayana practice instructions is for practitioners to become more self-sufficient in their practice.

The following sutric passages give instructions on the five sublime eyes.

The sutric passage that gives instructions on the physical sublime eye is:

Great Bodhisattvas' physical sublime eyes see one hundred yojanas... see two hundred yojanas, three hundred [yojanas], four hundred [yojanas], five hundred [yojanas], one thousand [yojanas], Jampudvipa, two continents, three continents, four continents, a one-thousand-fold world-system, a two-thousand-fold world system, and a three-thousand-fold world system...

The sutric passage that gives instructions on the celestial sublime eye is:

Great Bodhisattvas' celestial sublime eyes exactly know death-transference and birth of all sentient beings of the southern world system that equal the amount of grains of sand of the [river] Ganges." The same is said with respect to each of the other nine directions...

The sutric passage that gives instructions on the sublime eye of wisdom is:

When Bodhisattvas engage in the practice of the perfection of wisdom, those that [ultimately] do not know, do not see, do not think, and do not realize [the true existence] of all phenomena, ranging from form up to the omniscient mind of a Buddha, Shariputra, are the sublime eyes of wisdom...

The sutric passage that gives instructions on the sublime eye of Dharma:

Bodhisattvas' sublime eyes of Dharma [know Aryas] beings who are followers of faith and [Arya] beings who are followers of Dharma...

(Please note that practitioners who are *followers of faith* refer to practitioners of weak faculty and practitioners who are *followers of Dharma* refer to practitioners of sharp faculty.)

The sutric passage that gives instructions on the sublime eye of a Buddha is:

Great Bodhisattvas who practice the perfection of wisdom realize in one mental instance all phenomena ranging from form up to the omniscient mind of a Buddha...

These passages teach the five sublime eyes because they teach that conventionally the five sublime eyes have particular abilities and powers but that ultimately they lack true existence.

With regard to the treatises commenting on the five sublime eyes, the **Ornament** says:

The five sublime eyes

